

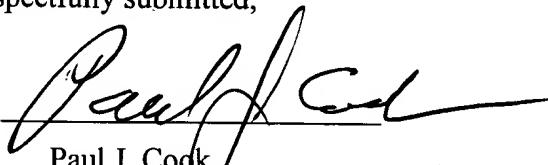
and 15-17.

It is the Examiner's position that the species of the generic invention are not so linked as to form a single generic inventive concept. In contrast, it is the applicants' position that the single generic concept is the provision of a depth filter free of an open void volume upstream of the depth filter in order to remove undesirably large particles from a slurry being filtered. The structure of the end caps can be of any structure and this desired result is obtained. All of the claims are so limited. In addition, the nature of the slurry being filtered does not bear on this claimed structure (free of an open void volume upstream of the depth filter). The filter does not react chemically or biologically with the particles being filtered. In all cases, the filter functions to retain larger particles in the slurry while permitting passage therethrough of desired size particles. Success in the filtration process does not depend upon the chemical or biological composition of the slurry.

In view of the above, it is submitted that applicants' claims define patentable subject matter and an early Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By



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